

A Living Hope...A Sure Salvation

Lesson 5

Introduction To 2nd Peter

Overview

Peter's first epistle offered a living hope to followers of Jesus Christ, a hope that must remain steadfast in the face of suffering (**cp. 1:3; 4:12-16**). His second letter focuses on knowledge of the will of God, a knowledge that must remain sharp in the face of false teachers and their pernicious doctrines (**cp. 2:1; 3:3, 17-18**).

Lest we think the two epistles are not related in their respective themes, we must remember that for us to enjoy the hope of the eternal home God has provided for us, we must give ourselves fully to acquiring such knowledge. One cannot be obtained without the other.

In the first chapter of his second letter, the apostle Peter affirms the existence of the absolute truth of God. He describes the process of how one goes about developing the character necessary to achieve a knowledge of this truth (**1:2-11**). He declares this truth to be based on both eyewitness testimony (**1:16-18**) as well as on the words of prophets (**1:19-21**).

Secondly, Peter reminds us of the existence of false teachers and their evil attempts at substituting human words for Divine words. Also, he reveals the destruction from God that awaits them as well as the means by which they attempt to gain their following (**2:1-22**).

Finally, Peter proclaims the certainty of the Lord's second coming which will usher in a new order of things (**3:3-13**). Because the things of which he speaks are unalterable truths, he asks and answers the question, "...what sort of people ought you to be...", "...since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless, and blameless,..." (**3:11, 14**).

By his own admission, much of what Peter has to say in his final epistle are things his readers already know (**1:12**). This is not pointless, but serves to keep his readers sharp and focused on what is truly important. Teachers review their students all the time in secular education; why not all the more in our spiritual development?

Having no specific information as to when or from where he wrote his second epistle, we can only assume Peter penned **2nd Peter** shortly after he wrote **1st Peter** (somewhere around 63 – 68 A.D.), and composed it from the same location – Babylon (**cp. 1 Pet. 5:12**).

Audience

Though the greetings in both letters are not the same, we know Peter wrote the second epistle to the same group addressed in his first one (**3:1**). It was addressed to saints living in the 1st century, and by God's providence, it is preserved for saints living today.

Purpose

The apostle wanted to remind his readers of some very important things (**1:12-15; 3:1**). Judging from his comments in **1:13-15**, Peter may have seen this as his last opportunity to write to these brethren. Even after his departure, he wanted his readers to always refer to such writings to help them in living for the Lord.

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Theme

In a word...***knowledge***. More specifically, a working knowledge, especially in the face of threatening false doctrines. God's children must have a solid understanding of the Lord's doctrine handed down through the apostles & other inspired writers to overcome any false teacher and his doctrine.

Peter devotes a large portion of his 2nd epistle to false teachers and how they attempt to entice people to follow them. Among the false doctrines Peter deals with in the letter are...

- the denial of Jesus as the Messiah **(2:1)**
- sensuality in the name of religion **(2:1, 10, 18)**
- disrespect of civil authority **(2:10)**
- repudiation of what the apostles taught re: the second coming of Christ and the end of the world **(3:3-10)**

Please refer again to the outline on page 3.